



On Top Of The News

Email: news@arubatoday.com

Wednesday, December 24, 2008

INSIDE TODAY

U.S. NEWS

NO CONTACT



Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich addresses reporters during a news conference at the State of Illinois building in Chicago, Friday, Dec. 19, 2008. Blagojevich says he is not guilty of any criminal wrongdoing and plans to stay on the job.

See **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

SPORTS NEWS

GOULDEN BOOT



Chicago Bears place kicker Robbie Gould smiles as he walks off the field after kicking a 38-yard game-winning field goal against the Green Bay Packers in overtime of their NFL football game at Soldier Field in Chicago Monday, Dec. 22, 2008.

See **Sports Today**

“White Christmas?” head to the beach!

The odds of a “white Christmas” in temperate parts of the northern hemisphere have diminished in the last century due to climate change and will likely decline further by 2100, climate and meteorology experts said.

Even though heavy snow this year will guarantee a white Christmas in many parts of Asia, Europe and North America, an 0.7-degree Celsius (1.3 Fahrenheit) rise in world temperatures since 1900 and projected bigger rises by 2100 suggest an inexorable trend.

“The probability of snow on the ground at Christmas is already lower than it was even 50 years ago but it will become an even greater rarity many places by the latter half of the century,” said Friedrich-Wilhelm Gerstengarber, climate researcher at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research. In the northern German city of Berlin, for instance, the chances of snow on the ground on December 24, 25 and 26 have fallen from 20 percent a century ago to

approximately 15 percent in 2008, he said. By 2100 the odds will be less than 5 percent.

Berlin last had snow on the ground at Christmas in 2001, and even though the German capital is due a festive snowfall, from a statistical point of view, meteorologists say it will not be white in 2008 either.

In cities with more maritime climates, such as London, and mild continental climates like Paris, snow on Christmas is even now fairly rare and will only be a freak occurrence within 100 years, he said. No snow is expected in either city this year. “The yearning for snow at Christmas seems to grow stronger the rarer it becomes,” Gerstengarber told Reuters, noting cities at low altitudes such as Berlin (30 meters above sea level) will probably almost never see snow surviving on the ground by 2100.

Betting on the fabled “white Christmas” is a pastime in some countries, like Britain, and oddsmakers will increasingly have to factor in global



A woman walks up a staircase in Central Park during a snowstorm in New York December 19, 2008.

REUTERS/Lucas Jackson

warming’s impact, climate researchers said.

IRVING BERLIN SONG

Evidence continues to mount that mankind is to blame for climate change, according to the U.N. Climate Panel. Drawing on the work of 2,500 experts, it says greenhouse gases, mainly from burning fossil fuels, are blanketing the planet.

Emissions of the gases, led by carbon dioxide, have surged by about 70 percent since 1970 and

could in the worst case more than double again by 2050, it says. Rising temperatures will bring more floods, heatwaves, stronger storms and rising seas. Paal Prestrud, director of the Center for International Climate and Environmental Research in Oslo, said the sort of “white Christmas” in the 1940 Irving Berlin song made famous by Bing Crosby will be rare in the decades ahead -- even in Oslo □

Christmas gasoline price lowest in 5 years

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – U.S. drivers are paying the lowest gasoline prices in five years heading into a Christmas holiday week, the government said on Monday.

The national price for regular unleaded gasoline is \$1.65 a gallon, down just over half a cent from the previous week and \$1.33 less than a year ago, the federal Energy Information Administration said in its weekly survey of service stations. It was the cheapest pump price going into Christmas since \$1.49 a gallon in 2003.

Fuel costs are falling due to cheaper crude oil and declining gasoline demand as a result of the weak economy.

U.S. crude oil futures on Monday settled just below \$40 a barrel at the New York Mercantile Exchange. Oil peaked at a record high of \$147 a barrel in July.

In the EIA’s weekly survey, gasoline was most expensive on the West Coast at \$1.79 a gallon, up 4 cents from last week. San Francisco had the highest city price at \$1.82, up 6.1 cents.

The Rocky Mountain states had the lowest regional price at \$1.53 a gallon, down 3.4 cents. Houston had the lowest city pump price, up 2.3 cents at \$1.48.

The EIA also reported gasoline prices were up 3.1 cents at \$1.81 in Seattle, down 2.1 cents at \$1.80 in Miami, up 5.3 cents at \$1.77 in Los Angeles, down 4.9 cents at \$1.71 in New York City, down 4.7 cents at \$1.64 in Cleveland, down 1.7 cents at \$1.63 in Boston and down 2.1 cents at \$1.54 in Denver. □



A customer pumps gasoline on Manhattan’s lower east side in New York October 23, 2005.

(Keith Bedford/Reuters)

Premium Chicken Line

Crispy or Grilled

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CHICKEN CLUB BACON

CHICKEN CLASSIC

CHICKEN HONEY MUSTARD

Texas de Brazil hosts a wonderful night out

Scent of perfumes blend with that of fine food and wine



PALM BEACH – The staff and management of Perfume Palace sat down for a night of fine dining at Texas de Brazil

Churrascaria to celebrate Christmas, and to finish off a great year of selling the finest fragrances on the island.



As the army of carvers descended on the party to them the finest cuts of beef, lamb, pork and sausages, the

fine wines brought to the table enhanced the already fantastic atmosphere. The staff and Management

of Perfume Palace wish you happy holidays, and a wonderful new year. □

~Photos by JJ~



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NEW ARRIVALS

Salvatore Ferragamo

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WWW.FERRAGAMO.COM

The trendiest coffee on Aruba

Segafredo opens at South Beach Mall



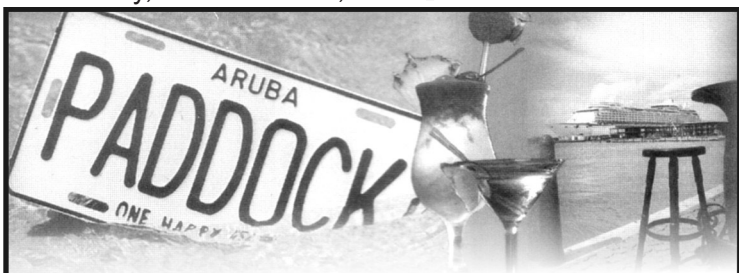
PALM BEACH – Last Sunday, Segafredo very quietly opened its doors in the new South Beach Mall, right across from the High Rise Hotels. General Manager Maarten Alberts has trained his staff to utter perfection on how to make the best coffees. Segafredo will be opened from 6AM for the early starters until midnight.



They will serve you the best Segafredo coffees during the morning to get you going, during lunch you will find fresh panini sandwiches, pizza, lasagna and salads. Night time at Segafredo's

promises special coffees, martini's, long drinks and of course beer on one of the trendiest locations on the island. Congratulations on the opening from Aruba Today! ☐

~Photos by JJ~



THE PADDOCK-WEEK

SUNDAY

11PM TILL 01AM \$2-BAR
**ALL-U-CAN-EAT
BURGERS for \$10**

MONDAY

LIVE MUSIC

ENJOY A RELAXED AND CASUAL DINNER
ON OUR TERRACE WITH A BEAUTIFULL
VIEW OF THE SUNSET.

TUESDAY

LIVE MUSIC

2 FOR TUESDAY HAPPY HOUR
FROM 11PM TILL MIDNIGHT
"ASK ONE-GET-TWO"

WEDNESDAY

ALL U CAN EAT RIBS
only \$13 starting at 5pm
Student Night All Drinks **\$1.50**
11pm to 1am

THURSDAY

Live Music

"DUTCH MEAL"

Weekly something different

FRIDAY

DUTCH HAPPY HOUR from 5 till 7pm
Half Price on 1 BEER and 1 MIX DRINKS!
FREE SNACKS!!

SATURDAY

**RED HOT
SATURDAY**
Every hour 15 min. \$1.00

We serve Breakfast at 8:30am
EVERY DAY



www.paddock-aruba.com

At Windows on Aruba

Teachers of Scol Caiquetio enjoy a festive evening



DIVI LINKS -- Windows on Aruba hosted teachers of Scol Caiquetio as they got together for a much-anticipated Christmas dinner.

The chefs of Windows on Aruba prepared an excellent gourmet menu which was served in the beautifully plated signature style of



the restaurant. The menu included Tuna & Shrimp as appetizer followed by Sea Bass & Scallops for main course and a sinful Chocolate & Grand Marnier holiday dessert.

The Celebrity Contest with special appearances by Tina Turner and Elvis Presley was much appreciated. The teachers of Scol Caiquetio have special talents, and it showed. □

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HELP US DECORATE OUR CHRISTMAS TREE

Buy a Kids Meal and receive a X-mas ball, which you can decorate your way. If you bring back your decorated X-mas ball you might win one of the beautiful prizes.



HAVE IT YOUR WAY!

Last day to bring your X-mas ball is on January 9, 2009



Fast Delivery Services can't wait for Christmas



enjoyed an exceptional dinner celebration at the island's premier celebration restaurant. Fast Delivery Services N.V. is Aruba's leading provider of courier, transportation and distribution services. Fast offers a wide range of same-day delivery services including messenger, courier and distribution for clients consisting of small firms to large corporations. The group enjoyed an incredible evening at Texas de Brazil for an evening of Holiday celebration and fantastic Churrascaria



never ending service which stayed on green for go for parallels the FAST service. the entire evening. ☐ The staff and their guests ~ Photos by JJ ~

Now Open Now Open Now Open Now Open Now Open Now Open

Now Open
Quickie Lickie

Tel: 586-7556 LAUNDROMAT

At Palm Beach 186, Next to Wendy's

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK



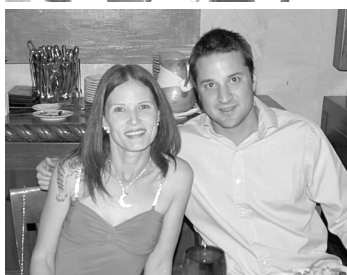
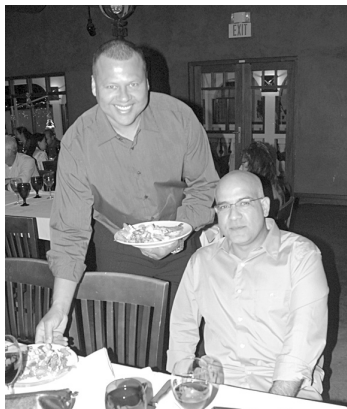
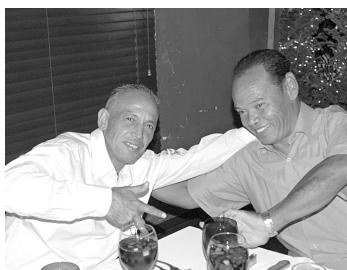
Mon-Sat 8:00 - 9:00

Sunday 8:00 - 4:00

Self Service / Drop Off AVAILABLE

We're located at walking distance from the High Rise Hotel

Happy Holidays



PALM BEACH – This week, the management and staff of Fast Delivery Services



Wonderful Sailing along Aruba

Come with your group of friends
The whole ship only for YOU !!!
4 hours coastal cruise, start at Havana beach
Bring your own drinks & snacks
Price for group of 10 pers: US\$ 300

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Wednesday: BBQ Night!

\$19.95 per person plus service charge

Featuring mouthwatering Texas BBQ Beef Brisket, Chicken & Ribs. Accompanied by Rice, Vegetables, Gourmet Salad Bar and Dessert Station.



All You Can Eat Dinner Buffet
LagunaRestaurantAruba.com

Dinner Buffet: 5:00 to 10:00 p.m.

*Kids under age 12, one per paying adult.

● KIDS EAT FEE ●

Not valid with any others offers.



SunsetGrilleAruba.com

Nightly Special: Fine Dining

USDA Prime Beef, Fresh Seafood and Spa Cuisine
Voted "2007 Best Restaurant in the Caribbean"
AAA 4-Diamond & Wine Spectator Award Winner

Choose from indoor art deco ambiance or open-air terrace dining.

Reservations Recommended



The Larimar Spa at the Radisson Aruba features nine beautifully appointed treatment rooms, offering a full menu of services including advanced skin care therapies, therapeutic and integrated massages, exfoliating, nourishing and detoxifying body treatments including body polishes and wraps, and a full-service salon...all certain to ensure your return to indulge time after time.

- Massages
- Body Treatments
- Facials/Skincare
- Salon Services
- Gift Certificates

Open Daily 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
For appointments, call 526.6053

LarimarSpaAruba.com



MiraSoloAruba.com

Martini Bar

Our outdoor lounge perched atop cascading waterfalls and open to sun, stars and cooling breezes. Liquid pleasures await...premium vodkas, scotches, cognacs, and tequilas - or choose from our Martini Madness menu. The place to start, end or spend the evening!

Open weekdays from 4 p.m. and weekends from 3 p.m.

Live music with "El Prove"



GilligansAruba.com

Casual Beachside Dining

Breakfast: 7:00 to 11:00 a.m.
Lunch: 12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m. • Dinner: 6:00 to 10:00 p.m.

Sunset Salute Happy Hour with Live Entertainment

Daily 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.
Bar: 11:00 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.

J.E. Irausquin Boulevard 81 | Palm Beach | Radisson.com/Aruba | 526.6612 or 526.6613



Lucky winners at the Excelsior Casino



PALM BEACH - These guests was the lucky winner of the Excelsior Casino. This week, this lucky lady won an amount of \$1000,- and the other lucky lady won the power ball bingo an amount of \$1328

The Excelsior Casino is located in the Holiday Inn Resort, a 600 room facility. The Casino has been in existence for 30 years; 50% of our guests come from the United States, 30% from South America and the balance from Europe. The beautiful Excelsior Casino will satisfy your taste for games of chance. One of Aruba's finest casinos, the Excelsior Casino features Las Vegas style gambling of all games of chance as well as a beautiful sports betting area and poker room.

The Excelsior Casino is the only casino in Aruba to offer 3-4-5 times odds on Craps and Double Deck Blackjack. Spanish 21 and Blackjack can be delt out of a shoe at your request. And, most of all, the Excelsior Casino does not hit the soft 17. The Excelsior Casino features the largest Poker Room with limits as low as \$2-\$4 to \$50-\$100 no limit.

No need to carry coins to the cashier! The Excelsior Casino's state of the art slot machines are totally Ticket-In, Ticket-Out ☐



Build your dream home on Aruba!

Last 2 lots available in prestigious "Westpunt"
Lot #1 - 404m2 property land **\$59.000,-**
Lot #2 - 568m2 property land **\$78.650,-**
Both are located at the end of a Cul de Sac with all brand new homes and paved streets.
New home + land for as little as \$158.000,-

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Enjoying the best selection of meats Churrascaria style

Paradise Beach Villas finds dining Paradise



PALM BEACH – The ever so hard working Housekeeping staff from Paradise Beach



Villas chose Texas de Brazil Churrascaria for their very well deserved Christmas dinner. The group was completely pampered by the expert staff of Texas de Brazil. The hardworking housekeeping staff enjoyed

the most fabulous salad bar on the island followed by the endless supply of the finest cuts of beef, lamb, pork and sausages served Churrascaria style coupled with some very fine wines made for a great night indeed.

Happy Holidays to the Housekeeping team of



Paradise Beach Villas.
~Photos by JJ~



Tierra del Sol
ARUBA RESORT, SPA AND COUNTRY CLUB

Ventanas del Mar

CHRISTMAS DINNER

DECEMBER 24 • 25 • 26

For reservations Call us: 586 7800 • Limited seating

Amuse

Pan seared jumbo scallop served with wakame salad & pica paya aioli

Timbale of Tuna and Rock lobster

Timbale of tuna tartar and sautéed langouste served with Wasabi crème fraiche and a crispy salad of pickled mango & bell pepper

King Crab Corn Soup-Cognac Foam

Coco nut lemon grass crab soup, corn, green scallions, toasted almonds & cognac cream

Sherbet

Raspberry Sherbet & Vanilla Champagne Coulis

Grilled Angus Beef Sirloin-Jumbo Tiger Prawns

Wild mushrooms, green asparagus & Jack Daniels sauce

Nougat Parfait

Saffron Strawberries, caramelized pine apple, Vanilla lemon grass sauce & caramelized chestnuts

Price per person US\$ 65.00 • Plus 15 % service charge & 3% sales tax



TEXAS de BRAZIL
CHURRASCARIA
Brazilian Steakhouse

'Tis the Season!

From all of us at
Texas de Brazil Churrascaria
We would like to say Thank You for
All the great times and memorable moments
And wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy
New Year!!!

Join us and
Experience
Texas de Brazil!
For information
And reservations
Call 586 4686
Or ask your concierge

Repeat Offenders Wanda, Debbie Sparky and Bill




JOLLY Pirates
SAIL, SNORKEL, SWIM & SWING!
DAILY 9:30-2pm \$55pp
Visit 3 Great sites with BBQ, Open Bar, Gear & Ropeswing!
AFTERNOON SNORKEL
DAILY 3-6pm only \$33pp
Shorter version of am cruise
Open Bar, Gear & Ropeswing!
SUNSET SAIL
Mon & Fri 5-7pm only \$27pp
Open Bar included
Call 586 8107 or 592 7858

\$10 off
Valid only with direct tat. reservation - cannot be combined with other offers. Save \$10 per couple/night for morning cruises. Save \$5 per couple/night for afternoon cruises.

MooMba Beach- Captured aboard the Jolly Pirates was adventure and excitement on the sunny afternoon this foursome returned aboard the Jolly Pirates Teak Schooner. Although they rated their Jolly Pirate experience their favorite, the foursome also enjoyed an ATV outing and golfing at Divi Links. If you want to enjoy a Jolly Pirate experience for yourself, Jolly Pirates Snorkel and Sunset Sail tickets can be purchased at the Jolly Pirates souvenir shop at MooMba Beach located between the Holiday Inn and Marriott Hotels. Use the Aruba Today coupon to enjoy all the entertainment of a Jolly Pirates cruise at an extra value. The entire crew is ready and waiting to welcome you aboard! Tel: 586-8107

EXCELSIOR CASINO

is the Home of Aruba's oldest and most famous POKER ROOM

Live Games start at 5 pm
Tournaments every night at 6 pm

Monday: \$125 buy-in no re-buys
Tuesday: \$125 buy-in no rebuys
Wednesday: \$75 buy-in 2 re-buys + Add-On
Thursday: \$240 no re-buys
Friday: \$240 1 re-buy
Saturday: \$240 no re-buys
Sunday: \$240 no re-buys

5 TIMES ODDS ON CRAPS
DOUBLE DECK BLACK JACK
SPANISH 21
THREE CARD POKER
LET-IT-RIDE
ROULETTE

ONLY CASINO IN ARUBA
WHERE THE DEALER STANDS
ON SOFT 17

SPORTS BOOK with LIVE SIMULCAST OF
MAJOR TRACKS
NO CHARGE ON WINNINGS
SLOTS OPEN 9 AM
TABLE GAMES 12:30 PM
POKER ROOM 5 PM

CONVIENENT PARKING

Located at the Holiday Inn
Where There's Always A Game

HADICURARI Restaurant

Invites YOU to
A WHITE CHRISTMAS
On the BEACH

The staff of Hadicurari wishes you happy holidays in Aruba. Come and join us and try one of our three Christmas menu's or just simply dine a la carte.

Our Christmas
special is available
the 25th and 26th
of December.

Kids' menus
are also available!

For reservation
call 5862288 or
e-mail us at

hadicurari@arubawineanddine.com



It's time again Celebrate Christmas at Matilde

DOWNTOWN - Matilde will host the perfect Christmas lunch or dinner with family, friends or colleagues! Our restaurant gives you the surrounding you want to celebrate Christmas in style.

Our Executive Chef Linda has created various exceptional menus specifically for this year's Christmas Celebrations. We have menus for lunch or dinner, which will let up to hun-

dred persons rejoice in the splendor only on offer at Matilde. We also serve our regular a la carte menu during the holidays. We invite you to have a look at our mouth watering menus, and give us a call to make your reservation.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions you may have, we will gladly assist you in making your holidays an unforgettable celebration!



Matilde Restaurant
Havenstraat 23
Oranjestad

For reservations please call
583 9200
Or e-mail:
mail@matildearuba.com



“Aruhiba” Aruba’s homemade cigar



ORANJESTAD - Benjamin Petrochi has started the newest export product of Aruba, locally produced cigars called ‘Aruhiba’. These cigars are produced and cultivated in Aruba. Petrochi has always had an interest in the cigar business and has also sold cigars from outside, and now he is growing his own tobacco crop. After many attempts and trips to Santo Domingo and Cuba he started his own production and cultivation of




“Aruhiba” cigars in Aruba. The process took 5 years Petrochi’s dedication to the cigars is important for the molding and process of making a perfect cigar which takes a long time. The cigar case is specially designed for the cigars with the logo ‘Aruhiba’ and ‘Made in Aruba’. Petrochi considers ‘Aruhiba’ a promotion for Aruba through fine quality cigars. The company sells international cigars as well. Buy a gift box of Aruhiba



Corona with five cigars and get 1 free for \$35.00. Located at the Historic Dutch Windmill from 8am to 8pm. Closed on Sunday. The only place to get Aruhiba and all major credit cards accepted. We have homemade and best premium Cuban Cigars. All cigars are legal through costum. Call 586-7833 or 593-6177. Open for tour operators and we have a large parking space. Come and see Mr. Petrochi rolling the cigars everyday.



Pam-Pam Restaurant offers a unique gourmet dining experience



Basic Gourmet : Chicken
\$ 15.-
Beef
Pork
Hamburger
Groundbeef bacon rolls

Luxe Gourmet : chicken
\$ 20.-
Beef
Pork
Hamburger
Grouperfilet
shrimp

Salad
Onion - Paprika
French bread with garlic butter
Variety of sauces

Salad
Patato salad
Onion - Paprika
French bread with garlic butter
Mushrooms
Bacon
Variety of sauces



Located in the charming topical environs of the Perle D’Or Resort, the Pam-Pam Restaurant offers a peek at Aruba’s cunucu (countryside) while still being conveniently located close to all of Aruba’s prime resorts. First-time patrons will be pleasantly surprised by an appealing a la carte menu that is quite affordably priced,

Pam-Pam’s house specialty is a unique method of preparation, which presently, in Aruba, is found only at their establishment and which they have dubbed their “Gourmet Meal.” A grill and a collection of the freshest of ingredients for the various dishes ordered are assembled tableside, and patrons prepare the food themselves, controlling their preference of seasonings and garnishes, along with degree of doneness, providing a unique and personal taste treat. Gourmet are priced either \$15 or \$20 p.p.

It is suggested that reservations for this singular dining experience be made one day in advance or at least before 1.00 pm Pam-Pam Café and its proprietor, Nico



and Monique, aside from a wonderful and affordable meal provide a friendly atmosphere and a great place to get to know island life and the islanders that frequent visit this popular restaurant. Open seven days a week for

breakfast, lunch & dinner. It is a perfect stop to relax and enjoy ambiance any time of the day true island. When you want to see restaurants menu, visit: www.visitaruba.com. Phone: 5877710 or 5932660

Aruban resident Jeff Lesker

General Manager of the Radisson St Martin Resort, Marina & Spa



Anse Marcel, San Martin -- Veteran hotelier Jeffrey A. Lesker is general manager of the Radisson St Martin Resort, Marina & Spa. The 18-acre, luxury resort is located at Anse Marcel, one of the best-preserved and most secluded coves on the French side of St Martin, on the site of the former L'Habitation de Lonvilliers Resort. The landmark, oceanfront resort was originally home to Le Meridian resort.

Lesker is well known throughout the Caribbean hospitality industry from his most recent post as general manager of the Radisson Aruba Resort, Casino & Spa, a AAA Four Diamond® Award winner and the hotel group's flagship property.

"We are delighted to have a proven executive of Jeff's stature serving as general manager for what will surely become another showcase resort in the Caribbean," said Bjørn Gullaksen, executive vice president and brand leader of Carlson Hotels Worldwide Managed Hotels & Resorts. "Jeff's passion and hospitality industry expertise is evident in every endeavor he undertakes and we look forward to his continued leadership." A 25-year industry veteran, Lesker served as general manager of Radisson Aruba since 1998. Prior to joining Radisson, he was general manager of various Wyndham Hotels & Resorts properties in the Caribbean, U.S. and Canada, including Wyndham Aruba and Wyndham Palm Springs, CA.

Jeff has been in St Martin for three years overseeing the transformation of the resort which has undergone an \$80 million transformation. The ocean-front luxury property boasts 63 suites and 189 guestrooms; a signature beachfront restaurant with al fresco dining; casual, market-style eatery; lobby tapas bar; zero-entry infinity pool; full-service spa and fitness center; 7,500 square feet of meeting space and 150-slip marina.

Radisson St Martin Resort, Marina & Spa is part of Radisson Resorts ongoing expansion in the Caribbean and will be the second jewel in their Caribbean crown, which includes their award-winning flagship: Radisson Aruba Resort, Casino & Spa.

Pictured here Jeff Lesker at the opening reception, talking to staff, posing with his executive assistant Fabienne Cartier; and Bjørn Gullaksen talking to press members, pre-opening. □



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Get Wet and Treasure!

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For The Entire Family.

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Buccaneer RESTAURANT

Buccaneer Restaurant is an island tradition for over 25 years that serve creative dishes prepared with a European touch with irresistible secret flavorings which continue to lure guests back, again and again. Feast on fresh Caribbean catch in one of the cozy booths with a view of an aquarium at each seat, surrounded by tropical splendor and nautical decor. Our second dining room resembles an underwater cave, complete with a 7,500 gallon saltwater aquarium, unseen elsewhere. Our friendly staff is here to give you the "Welcome Aboard" feeling and the chef-owner will personally take care of you.

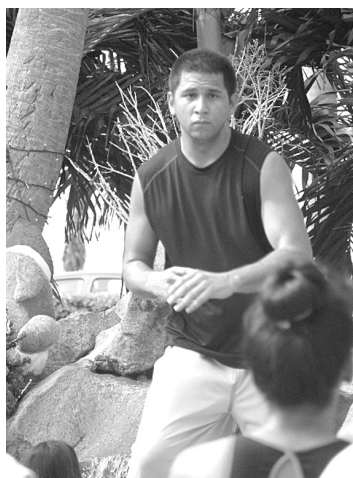
Located at Gasparito 11-C,
between low and high rise hotels.
Closed on Sundays –
serving dinners
from 5:30 -10:00pm
Phone: 297-586-6172

WITH THIS AD A
FREE GLASS
OF HOUSEWINE



Two hours of Zumba starting at 9 am at the Renaissance Marketplace

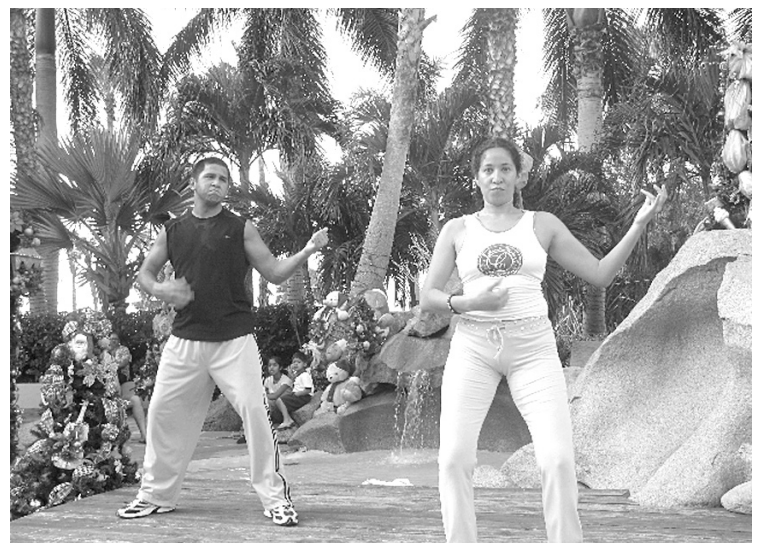
Don't miss Zumba lesson this Saturday



ORANJESTAD — This coming Saturday, you can join in the last Zumba lesson of the year at the Renaissance Marketplace.

There is no fee to join in the action, just be ready to exercise. Zumba is great for your health, your heart and general wellbeing.

This Saturday, December 27th,



the lesson starts at 9 am in front of Café the Plaza. There will be three professional instructors on hand to assist

seasoned Zumba athletes and those who want to try it for the first time.

Zumba is for everyone! □



A SPECIAL CHRISTMAS - EVE SERVICE

THE METHODIST CHURCH IN ARUBA INVITES ALL MEMBERS, GUESTS, VISITORS, AND FRIENDS ON OUR ISLAND, TO JOIN US FOR THE FOLLOWING SERVICES:

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24TH, 2008

FOR A SPECIAL

CHRISTMAS - EVE SERVICE

(CONDUCTED IN ENGLISH)

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

VENUE: WESLEY METHODIST CHURCH

{BEHIND TALK OF THE TOWN HOTEL
ACROSS THE STREET FROM BETICO PLAZA}

AND OUR WATCHNIGHT SERVICES ON

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2008

TIME 10:00 P.M.

VENUE: CHRIST CHURCH, BETHEL & WESLEY CHURCH

Come and receive a blessing this Christmas & New Year Seasons!

A MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL

WACKY WAHOO'S

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At The Westin Resort, Aruba

Associates share holiday spirit with feast



PALM BEACH - Recently, associates of The Westin Resort gathered together to enjoy a holiday luncheon. The festivities took place in the resort's Palm Beach Ballroom, where Chef Gerard and his culinary

team prepared a traditional holiday feast with ham, roast beef, hallacas, and all the trimmings. The resort's workers union, TEAM, sponsored the entertainment-Grupo di Betico-and The Westin All



Eat, Drink & Be Merry

At the Radisson Aruba Resort, Casino & Spa



Star Band also made a special appearance to the delight of their co-workers. The Westin associates also participated in a raffle for many prizes, including a stay at The Westin Resort in St. John's. □



Laguna Restaurant

Wednesday, December 24th, 2008
Christmas Eve Dinner Buffet \$19.95
5pm - 10pm

Thursday, December 25th, 2008
Christmas Day Surprise Breakfast Buffet \$19.95
7am - 12 noon

Chateaubriand Dinner Buffet. \$19.95
5pm - 10pm

Friday, December 26th, 2008
International Seafood Festival Buffet \$19.95
5pm - 10pm

Wednesday, December 31st, 2008
Goodbye 2008 Celebration Dinner Buffet \$23.95
Includes party favors

Saturday, January 1, 2009
Happy 2009 Breakfast Buffet \$19.95
7am - 12 noon



Sunset Grille



Wednesday, December 24th, 2008
Christmas Eve Holiday Dinner \$60.00
Regular Menu. 5pm - 11pm

Thursday, December 25th, 2008
Christmas Holiday Dinner \$60.00
Regular Menu. 5pm - 11pm

Friday, December 26th, 2008
Holiday Special \$60.00
Regular Menu. 5pm - 11pm

Wednesday, December 31st, 2008
Gala Dinner Menu. 5pm - 12 Midnight \$135.00
Includes premium open bar, party favors & midnight Champagne toast



Gilligan's
Beach Bar & Grill

Wednesday, December 24th, 2008
Special Holiday Dinner \$18.95
Regular Menu. 6pm - 10pm

Thursday, December 25th, 2008
Special Holiday Dinner \$18.95
Regular Menu. 6pm - 10pm

Wednesday, December 26th, 2008
Special Holiday Dinner \$18.95
Regular Menu. 6pm - 10pm

Wednesday, December 31st, 2008
New Year's Eve Dinner \$85.00
Dinner from 7pm - 10pm
Entertainment until 1am
Includes premium open bar, party favors & midnight Champagne toast.

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At La Quinta Beach Resort

ATA appoints several faithful visitors as ambassadors of goodwill



ORANJESTAD – Recently ATA honored several faithful visitors as goodwill ambassadors. The following visitors have been named as ambassadors of goodwill. They are Mr. Lionel and Mrs. Janet Gillespie, from New York, Mr. David and

Mrs. Dolores Bascianilli also from New York, Mr. Frank and Mrs. Brenda White from Ontario, Canada. Mr. Lois and Mrs. Duane Peightal from North Dakota, Mr. Micky Masye and Mrs. Nancy Yoko Nobuto and lastly Mr. Robert Winkle.

All this visitors have more than 20 years frequenting our island. They were all very happy to be honored by ATA and the government of Aruba. They recounted how they love the beautiful beaches, and the friendly people of our Island, the nice weather, the wide variety of restaurants, casino's and the excellent staff and La Quinta Beach Resort.

Mr. Castro Perez, representative of ATA was also present to give a speech and thank them for their loyalty and appreciation shown for our Island, this was in the presence of Mrs. Enrika Arends, General Manager of La Quinta Beach Resort. □

That wonderful time of the year

A Xmas story by Roland W. Peterson

I am walking in the drizzles
My face is wet
There is a cold breeze blowing
As I stick my hands in my pockets
I listen to the clattering of the tires
Of the cars driving by on the wet road
The lights are reflecting in the wet asphalt

There is something in the air
Yes that familiar cold breeze
People walk by in a hurry
But still have a smile on their face
Oh ... what a wonderful place
Yes it is that wonderful time of the year
I can feel it in the air

Now the drizzles have turned into raindrops
I too am in a hurry now
As I rush up the steps of the church
I look at my watch
It is five in the morning
As I shiver I brush the water of my shirt
Church bells are ringing
The choir is singing
There is a Xmas carol playing in my heart
Oh ... what a wonderful time of the year
To all who are dear
I wish you a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year.



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- * All Players will start with \$4,000 in tournament chips!!!
- * Blind and Limits will go up every 30 Minutes until the tournament concludes & NO ANTES!!!!

**WHEN: Saturday, December 27th,
2008 @ 5:30 p.m.**

WHERE: POKER ROOM at the Radisson

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And, we verify all Buy-Ins.



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Aruba ready for Reggae Party on Dec 26th



ORANJESTAD - This week a press conference was held for the Aruba Conscious Reggae Party that will be held at Havana Beach Club on December 26th, 2008. The organizers introduced themselves and explained the details of the upcoming event. The groups that will be performing on stage are ILA, Timbebandits and Isis Band together with Allout Crew and MC Daddy Bass with DJ Francis.

All of the groups are very prepared for this Conscious Reggae Party. The event will be filmed live and sold later to those who couldn't attend and for those who want to relive it over and over. □



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PALM BEACH - There is only one Bugaloe on Aruba: it is the hottest place to be cool and the coolest place to be hot. Friends and fun are the main ingredients at the beach bar, but great food, drinks and music get a good second place. The sunsets, the breeze and the turquoise ocean are right at the top as well, of course. Bugaloe is located on De Palm Pier on the beach between the RIU Palace and the Radisson Resort at the Hi-Rise strip: an easy walk from all the major hotels.

People from all over the world get together at Bugaloe: they have a few drinks,

a bite to eat, they dance and sway and make new friends. If you have gotten curious here and now, check out the website www.bugaloe.com and you will see at one glance what we are talking about. No words will be needed anymore. Surf to the website for the Bugaloe Event Calendar or leave a note in the Guestbook.

Bugaloe's daily Happy Hours are considered the starting signal for an evening of partying on the island. Locals mingle with visitors and raise their glasses. When you get hungry, order a scrumptious burger, a gourmet pizza, tasty wings or a salad and party on. The night is young, the world is going crazy and you are right in the middle of a super happening. What's not to like? A twice-a-month live breakfast radio show on Fri-

day mornings with a spectacular breakfast buffet will keep you entertained as well.

A hot tip: Bugaloe Beach Bar puts on live bands on Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays. Lotus (YouTube keywords: lotus, bugaloe) and Marisela & Aquarius (YouTube keywords: marisela, confidential, 2008) are playing the stars from the sky. These bands are drawing the crowds, so be there or be square! On those nights the young as well as the young-at-heart are having the time of their lives. Photos of Bugaloe's happy times can be viewed at www.bugaloe.com. Don't forget to put your own movie of you and your friends having a whale of a time at Bugaloe on the web and enjoy being famous, crazy and hilarious. So upload, upload! We are looking forward to seeing you on YouTube or live in action.





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PALM BEACH - The health and calorie conscious among us need fear steakhouses no more. Whether it's a low-carb, low-fat, or even vegetarian diet you follow, Texas de Brazil Churrascaria fits into just about every dieter's menu plan. **Low carb eaters will have all their expectations surpassed with a tempting carnivorous selection of**

umpteen cuts of sizzling beef, pork, lamb, sausage, and poultry. The meats are prepared in the healthiest style of cooking—slow roasting—where much of the fat drips off in the roasting process, so those looking for a lower fat option to sautéing, pan frying, or deep frying will also be able to indulge. The Brazilian-style steakhouse also offers up a gar-

den full of healthy eats on a **lavish 40-item seasonal salad bar**, giving dieters plenty to choose from to accompany the slow-roasted meats. A selection of fresh lettuces and vegetables may be standard for most salad bars, but **Texas de Brazil's** version goes a gourmet twist further, treating the palate to additional items like marinated portobello mushrooms, sweet roasted bell peppers, hearts of palm, sundried tomatoes, imported cheeses—including fresh buffalo mozzarella—sushi, homemade soups, and much more.

The salad bar is included in the continuous service meal with unlimited choices from the grilled meats, but for vegetarians or the non-meat eaters, a special price is offered for just the salad bar. Of course, for those looking

to splurge while on vacation, Texas de Brazil will gladly serve their garlic mashed potatoes, traditional fried plantains, and their world-famous parmesan cheese bread as part of the meal ☐

For more information or to make reservations, please call 586-4686



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Sunday 5 pm - 11 pm





Round-the-clock



A man walks through New York's Times Square after shopping at Toys R Us early Tuesday morning Dec. 23, 2008. Marathon shopping hours aren't new. Over the past three years, a growing number of stores have offered around-the-clock hours to bookend the holiday shopping season as they look to woo time-starved customers.

Associated Press

Read more on Page 3

Huge water main break traps motorists on Maryland road

By GILLIAN GAYNAIR

Associated Press Writer

BETHESDA, Maryland (AP) - A massive water pipe ruptured Tuesday and transformed a suburban Washington road into a raging torrent of whitewater, trapping nine motorists who had to be rescued by emergency workers in helicopters and boats.

Two people in a minivan climbed into a basket lowered by a helicopter. As floodwaters raged past them, water sprayed on a rescuer reaching out to save them. Crews also used a boat to rescue motorists from the 4-foot deep water.

Montgomery County fire officials said five people were

checked for hypothermia. The temperatures outside were in the 20s.

"The water tumbled over the car like a wave," said Silvia Saldana, of Springfield, Virginia, who was traveling to work when she became trapped. "I started to pray."

She also called her husband three times while she was stuck in the car for about 30 minutes before help arrived.

Fire spokesman Pete Piringer said crews had trouble getting to people because of the swift-moving water. Officials said 150,000 gallons of water per minute were gushing out at one point.

Schools in the county closed

In this image rendered from video and provided by WJLA-TV, a rescue worker helps a person from their stranded vehicle on River road near Washington D.C. Tuesday, Dec. 23, 2008. Crews are scrambling to rescue motorists who are stranded in at least four feet of water following a massive water main break just outside Washington, D.C.

Associated Press

early because of widespread water outages, and a hospital where three people rescued were treated and released diverted ambulances and closed its trauma division because of lost water pressure.

Group declares Guinea coup after dictator's death



Guinean soldiers on armoured vehicles patrols in the streets of Conakry. The White House on Tuesday called for a "peaceful and democratic transition" in Guinea hours after soldiers launched a coup attempt in the west African state following the death of strongman President Lansana Conte.

(AFP)

By ABOU BAKR and RUKMINI CALLIMACHI

Associated Press Writers

CONAKRY, Guinea (AP) - A military-led group seized control of the airwaves in Guinea and declared a coup Tuesday after the death of the mineral-rich West African country's longtime dictator, but the prime minister insisted he remained in charge.

An Associated Press reporter saw dozens of armed soldiers heading toward the prime minister's office inside the country's presidential compound. The troops' allegiance was not immediately apparent.

Continued on Page B6



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Bush pardons 19, commutes 1 prison term

President George W. Bush walks along the West Wing Colonnade before leaving the White House in Washington to spend the Christmas holiday at the Camp David presidential retreat, Tuesday, Dec. 23, 2008.
Associated Press

By DEB RIECHMANN
Associated Press Writer
WASHINGTON — Before leaving for the holidays, President Bush on Tuesday commuted one prison sentence and granted 19 pardons,

including one to a man who helped the Jewish resistance in the 1940s. With this latest batch, which includes forgiveness for convictions ranging from gun and drug violations to bank and mail fraud, Bush has granted a total of 191 pardons and nine commutations. That's fewer than half as many as Presidents Clinton or Reagan issued during their two terms. Included in the latest list is Charles Winters, who died in the 1980s in Florida. Winters helped ship arms and aircraft to Jews trying to found their own state in the Middle East. He was convicted of violating the Neutrality Act and served 18 months in prison. Two others, Herman Greenspun and Al Schwimmer, also were convicted but did not serve time. They were later granted presidential pardons. The only other presidential pardon granted posthumously in recent times was given to Henry O. Flipper, the first black graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Flipper was drummed out of the Army after white officers mistakenly accused him of embezzling about \$3,800 from commissary funds. □



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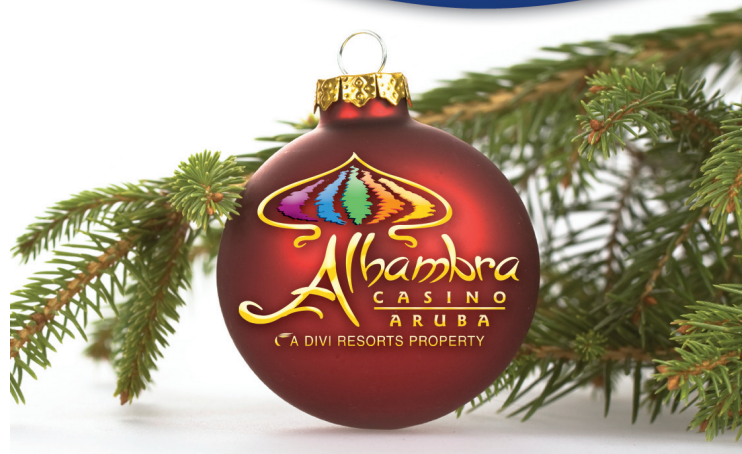
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Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the Management and Staff of Alhambra Casino!



Round-the-clock retail hours attract the unsleepy

By ASHLEY M. HEHER

AP Retail Writer

SCHAUMBURG, Ill. — It's 1:22 a.m. on the day before Christmas Eve and Keith McRae is exactly 10 minutes into his holiday shopping list. Loaded inside a red Macy's bag are a purse and peace-sign jewelry for his 12-year-old daughter and cologne for a friend.

The 42-year-old private detective is calm — too calm, really — for someone who's seemingly both uncaffeinated and unconcerned about the impending Christmas deadline.

"It's beautiful isn't it?" he mused while taking a break near a cosmetics counter as several dozen shoppers browsed nearby and sales clerks straightened displays. "I'm a nocturnal person, so this is much more my speed." Inside the store in the Chicago suburbs — one of about a dozen Macy's is keeping open for at least 108 hours as part of a marathon push to attract shoppers during the worst holiday shopping season in decades — 60 sales clerks volunteered to pull all-nighters while shoppers mill around racks at a leisurely pace. Marathon shopping hours aren't new. Over the past three years, a growing number of stores have offered around-the-clock hours to bookend the holiday shopping season as they look to woo time-starved customers.

But this year, there's desperation in the air as a miserable economy threatens to eviscerate the most profitable quarter of the year. That means the all-night hours are a chance to make up for lost ground.

Macy's employees estimate the store had a few hundred shoppers at 1:45 a.m.; by dawn, only one or two are meandering through each department.

Inside Macy's, red tag discounts await the sleepy.

"Jingle Bells" has played at least twice over the store speakers. The only lines are at an in-store Starbucks.

And it's downright weird.

Or is it?

Free from pushy crowds, packed parking lots and painfully long lines, Kathy Morris thinks the scene is practically ... poetic.

She was in the store Sunday evening but had to leave, unable to weave her way through the throngs of people. But now it's almost 2 a.m. and she's back, standing in the middle of an empty outerwear department examining a half-off brown Calvin Klein down coat — a soon-to-be gift from her husband who has joined her retail madness. The 33-year-old's already snagged suede gloves, jeans, a sweater and a women's loungewear set for family members at a total purchase price of \$98.05.

"It would probably take me all day to get through the crowds," she said. "So this is great."

A few miles away at an L.L. Bean store in South Barrington, it's 4:05 a.m. and 15 employees inside are stocking shelves and marking down the prices of outdoor gear. By the time Christmas Eve arrives, the store will have been open 24-hours-a-day for two weeks.

"We get phone calls here and there," said Paul Conwell, a manager in the store. "But for the most part it's quiet."

In fact, for long stretches of overnight hours, the store is completely empty of customers. At 5:45 a.m., the first one in five hours wanders in.

Last week, workers broke up the downtime by taking a kayak to a nearby creek for a middle-of-the-night ride in snowy water.

Back at Macy's, 18-year-old Samantha King is holding a video camera while her five other friends dance in front of a full-length mirror. Home from



Adriane Schauf shops for Christmas ornaments at 1a.m. at Macy's in the Woodfield Shopping Mall in Schaumburg, Illinois, Tuesday, Dec. 23, 2008.

Associated Press

college, the group is killing time and making a video. Two have already gotten makeovers at the Clinique counter.

"We're just running in and out of the aisles," King said. "You've got to keep moving or you'll fall asleep."

Scott Meyer, a 57-year-old health and safety consultant, isn't worried about that. He's more focused on the bracelets inside a jewelry case.

But he's not ready to buy. Not tonight. Or this morning. Or even this afternoon.

"I'm just kind of getting an idea. I'm just doing some comparison shopping," he said. "I'll probably go to a local place and if I don't like what they have there, I'll come back here tomorrow night at 2 in the morning."

Leeann Roames, 53, plans to be back, too, even though she's been to the Macy's four times since Saturday. She's been shopping at the Woodfield Mall with her 16-year-old daughter, Elisabeth, since 6 p.m. and by 3 a.m. is long-past regretting her choice of high-heeled shoes.

They've been to Starbucks twice, and have trekked back to the car to unload bags. Now, Elisabeth has folded herself

into a brown and cream Martha Stewart bedding display.

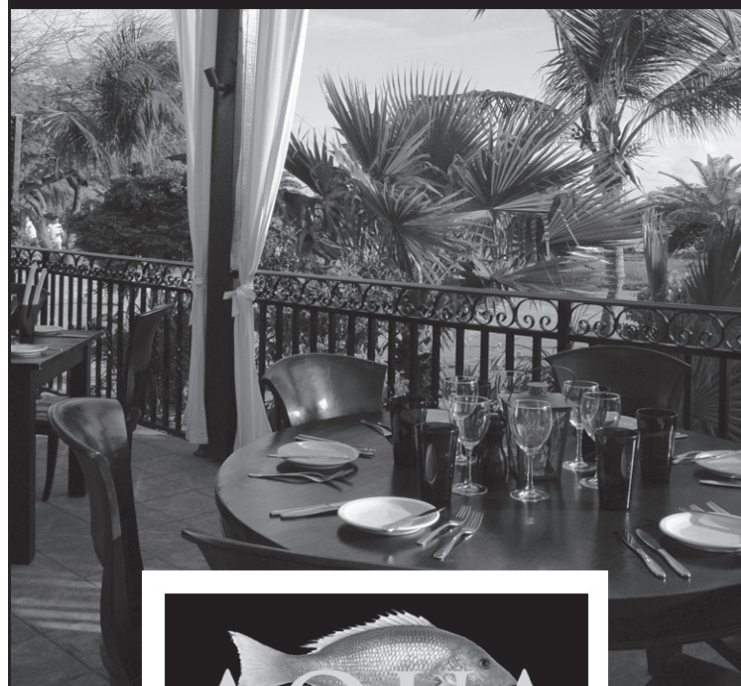
"It's just calling my name," she said.

Tom Reis, a district vice president for Macy's East

division, roams the store's three floors, plucking trash from the floor and fixing toppled towers of BCBG sweaters that are 30 percent off. □

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In this Dec. 22, 2003, file photo, Rep. Rahm Emanuel, D-Ill., right, answers a question as Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich, left, listens during a news conference in Chicago. Blagojevich is legendary in Illinois political circles for not picking up or returning phone calls, even from important figures like senior senator, Dick Durbin. But there was always one call Blagojevich regularly took, say his aides, and that was from Emanuel.

By **NEDRA PICKLER**
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - A much-awaited report due out later Tuesday will show no inappropriate contact between President-elect Barack Obama's staff and the governor of Illinois accused of trying to sell off Obama's Senate seat, Vice President-elect Joe Biden said. The report's release, expected Tuesday, comes as Obama is vacationing in Hawaii. Obama said last week he wants to answer questions

about conversations his aides had over filling his Senate seat because nothing inappropriate took place. But he kept the details private while the federal investigation continues in a scandal that has threatened to taint Obama's transition. "I don't think there anything to exonerate," Biden said, when asked about the report after an economic briefing. He said the report will show "there has been no inappropriate contact between any member of the Obama staff or transition team with (Gov. Rod)

Associated Press

Biden: Report to clear Obama aides in gov. probe

Blagojevich."

Aides have said Obama had no plans to make a public statement on his internal report while in Hawaii.

Incoming White House chief of staff Rahm Emanuel contacted the office of Gov. Rod Blagojevich about the appointment, according to a source close to the governor who requested anonymity because the person is not authorized to speak on the matter.

Blagojevich believed Emanuel was advocating Obama friend Valerie Jarrett for the Senate seat so he would not have to compete with her for Obama's attention in the White House, the source said.

The U.S. attorney's office had been secretly recording Blagojevich's calls since October. A federal complaint charging the governor with seeking cash and favors for Obama's vacant Senate seat does not cite conversations with Emanuel or others on the

transition staff.

U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald in Chicago said when announcing the charges that Obama was not implicated in the case, and sources have said Emanuel is not a target of prosecutors.

Emanuel has refused to comment on his recent interaction with Blagojevich and his staff. Emanuel succeeded Blagojevich in his House seat in 2002, when Blagojevich became governor. He also served as an informal campaign adviser to the governor and has a mutual friend with Blagojevich who has become a key player in the criminal investigation.

Meanwhile, federal prosecutors have asked the state legislative committee studying Blagojevich's impeachment not to dig into criminal charges against the governor, warning that it could "significantly compromise" their investigation.

Members of the committee

have promised to abide by any direction from prosecutors on what should be off limits, so the request from Fitzgerald means the panel won't question Blagojevich aides and campaign donors about possible crimes.

But the committee can still consider the fact that the Democratic governor has been charged with federal crimes. Members say they'll look at evidence outlined in the complaint against him - including wiretapped conversations.

The governor was arrested Dec. 9 on a variety of federal corruption charges, accused of scheming to benefit from his power to name Obama's replacement in the Senate.

The committee is supposed to recommend whether the full House should consider impeaching Blagojevich, and it has also reviewed allegations that he abused his power by defying legislative rulings, handing jobs to donors and ignoring procedures for awarding leases and contracts.

Blagojevich maintains he is innocent and will stay in office to fight the accusations.

Committee members have said that if they can't pursue the criminal charges, then their fact-gathering work is largely done. The panel will meet again next week so that Blagojevich's lawyer can respond to earlier witnesses.

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Sea-Tac stranded passengers finally flying out

By TIM KLASS

Associated Press Writer

SEATTLE — Crowds of stranded travelers at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport were drastically reduced, Amtrak restored passenger train service and motorists found easier going Tuesday — but more snow was on the way.

Many surface streets remained snowpacked, icy and rutted with treacherous gray slush across the normally balmy Pacific Northwest from weekend storms that brought 8 to 12 inches of snow to Seattle and nearby cities.

The National Weather Service issued a winter storm watch for much of Washington state, with another 1 to 3 inches of snow forecast in Seattle and as much as 6 inches in the suburbs by early Wednesday, to be followed by slightly warmer temperatures and rain later on Christmas Eve.

Meanwhile, freezing rain was making driving hazardous Tuesday across parts of the nation's midsection, including Kansas, Illinois, Kentucky and Arkansas. □



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In this Feb. 26, 2002 file photo, King Mohammed VI of Morocco, center, greets Guinea's President Lansana Conte, left, and Sierra Leone's President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah at the Rabat, Morocco. Conte, who has ruled the African nation with an iron hand since seizing power in a coup nearly a quarter century ago, died following a lengthy illness, the National Assembly president said Tuesday, Dec. 23, 2008.

Associated Press

GUINEA COUP

Continued from Page B1

But they appeared less than an hour after Prime Minister Ahmed Tidiane Souare announced in a state broadcast that he was inside his office and that his government had not been dissolved.

Two tanks were parked near the compound and a third was circulating through the capital. A fourth was parked at the headquarters of state-run radio and TV, where transmissions had been cut.

Earlier Tuesday, a group calling itself the National Council for Democracy began announcing its takeover on state-run radio and TV, just hours after longtime dictator Lansana Conte's death was made public. "The government is dissolved. The institutions of the republic are dissolved. ... From this moment on, the council is taking charge of the destiny of the Guinean people," said the coup leader, who identified himself as Capt. Moussa Camara. Conte, who was believed to be in his 70s although the government never disclosed his birth date, was only

Guinea's second president since it gained independence from France a half-century ago. He was one of the last members of a dwindling group of so-called "African Big Men" who came to power by the gun and resisted the democratic tide sweeping the continent. Conte's death on Monday leaves just a handful left, including Gabon's Omar Bongo, who took power in 1967 and Robert Mugabe, who has been Zimbabwe's only leader since its 1980 independence.

While Guinea has managed to avoid the catastrophic wars that have ravaged its West African neighbors, Jean-Herve Jezequel warned of a "real risk of violence in Conakry" regardless of who is officially in charge.

"We were all waiting for the situation to degenerate when Conte died, because the question of succession was never decided," said Jezequel, a West Africa scholar in France who works for the MSF Foundation, linked to the aid group Doctors Without Borders. Much will depend on whether another

strongman emerges or not in the coming days," said Jezequel, who predicted that any new leadership, even military-based, will likely hold presidential elections in part to appease the country's labor unions.

White House deputy press secretary Tony Fratto said the U.S. was working with other countries in the region and the African Union on the issue.

"We stand with the people of Guinea who certainly strive for peace and a democratic transition and an opportunity to get to a next government in the best way," Fratto said. "And it's obviously a troubled region and with a history that hasn't always seen those kinds of smooth transitions of power. And so we're keeping an eye on it."

The European Union called on political and military leaders to "respect constitutional measures to ensure a peaceful transition" via elections.

Guinea has half the world's known reserves of bauxite, the ore used to produce aluminum, and it has deposits of gold, diamonds and iron ore. Analysts say the nation, at the confluence of several West African rivers, could generate enough electricity to power the region.

But Guinea's economy has rapidly deteriorated and its 10 million people have remained among the poorest in the world. A food exporter at independence, Guinea turned to importing food as it became more impoverished, crippled by corruption, inflation and high unemployment. □

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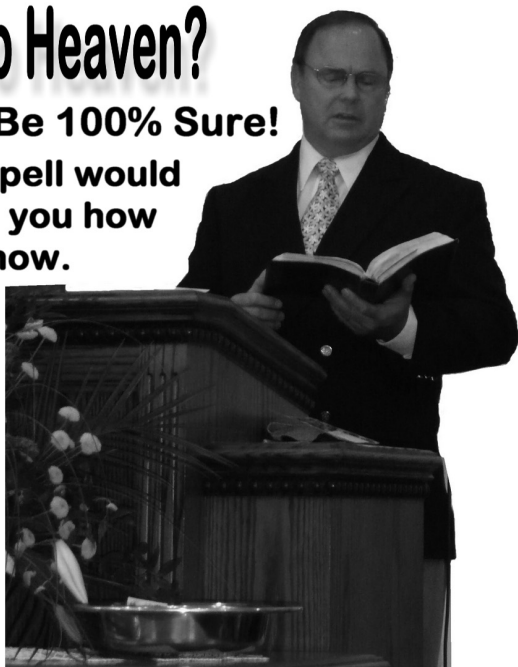


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Iraqi parliament ousts speaker, OKs non-US troops

By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA
Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD (AP) - Iraq's fractious parliament squeezed its abrasive speaker out of a job and authorized non-U.S. troops to stay for another half-year on Tuesday, in a pair of high-stakes moves in its final session of the year.

Under heavy pressure from Shiite and Kurdish lawmaker, Sunni speaker Mahmoud al-Mashhadani resigned on the losing end of a long-running power struggle. Lawmakers applauded his announcement, quickly approved it, then passed a measure allowing Britain's 4,000 troops and several smaller contingents from other countries to stay through July. "I do believe that I was faithfully doing good work," he said in his address to the chamber where he often offended other lawmakers. "If I caused hurt to you, I ask your forgiveness."

Al-Mashhadani has clashed repeatedly with Kurdish and Shiite lawmakers in recent years. The enmity reached its peak last week in a shouting match over the detention of the journalist who threw his shoes at President George W. Bush.

Within a half-hour of his resignation, parliament approved the troops measure in a voice vote - just a week before the U.N. mandate authorizing foreign troops was to expire.

The new measure will allow non-U.S. troops to stay through and assist U.S. troops until the end of July. The Americans can remain until the end of 2011 under a separate security agreement. The authorization for foreign troops became entangled in al-Mashhadani's quarrel with Kurdish and Shiite lawmakers last week, when he hurled abuse during a session and threatened to resign. His opponents ultimately forced him to keep his word. In turn, al-Mashhadani tried to delay until Jan. 7 the vote on the foreign troops resolution - a week after the Dec. 31 expiration of the U.N. mandate.

Britain has already said it plans to withdraw its 4,000 troops from southern Iraq by the end of May. Australia, El Salvador, Estonia and Romania also have troops in Iraq, but much smaller contingents.

Al-Mashhadani has long been at the center of arguments in the legislature because of his erratic behavior and abusive language. He told lawmakers in behind-the-scenes negotiations that in return for his resignation he wants to be named head of a human-rights association, Shiite

lawmaker Reda Jawad Taqi told The Associated Press before the session convened. The speaker also wanted a guarantee that his post would be filled by someone from a party other than al-Mashhadani's own Sunni Iraqi Islamic Party, with whom he is also feuding, Taqi said. □




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highest quality ham. The flavor and texture of the ham is the only one of its kind and the experience of the chef carving your personal slice is irreplaceable. The menu varies with a wide array of Italian dishes including a Sicilian-style thin crust pizza dripping with cheese, fresh-made tomato sauce and a variety of toppings in the meat, seafood and veggie categories. The menu doesn't stop there as Casa Tua features incredible appetizers including shrimp bruschetta, fresh marinated seafood, escargots, amazing

salads, homemade soups starting at \$6 and authentic Italian lasagnas & pastas starting at just \$14. The staff at this popular eatery has set the standard on the island for the term "great service" not only with your dining pleasure, but recognized as 'the' professionals in assisting guests with the perfect cocktail, paired wine or other beverages. After just one dinner at Casa Tua, you'll know your home in this family owned eatery. Victor Nataf and his sons Daveed and Gregory are always there to welcome you with the rest of



their staff. Gregory spends most of his time in the kitchen as the head chef repeating the recipes and perfect preparations passed to him from his uncle and three siblings who are renowned for their Mediterranean flair throughout France. Of course we saved the best for last as no one does an ending better than Casa Tua with their dreamy Tiramisu, or Profiteroles au Chocolat Chaud. The best part about such a good ending is that it guarantees you'll be back for more...

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Aniston & Wilson explore marriage in "Marley & Me"

By Nichola Groom

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) – In their new film "Marley & Me," Jennifer Aniston and Owen Wilson pick up where most couples in romantic comedies end -- at the start of a happily-ever-after marriage.

The movie, which opens Christmas Day, follows John and Jenny Grogan as they evolve from career-focused

newlyweds to parents of three young children. It afforded both actors the challenge of making the ins-and-outs of married life look as exciting as any over-the-top boy-meets-girl comedy, they said. "It was refreshing to read a story about a marriage and not be the traditional romantic comedy with some high-concept plot to see how the guy's going to get the girl or

how the girl's going to get the guy," Aniston told Reuters in a recent, joint interview with Wilson. "You know, she's leaving for Antarctica. He has to take a boat there to get her," Wilson joked, to emphasize the typical high-concept Hollywood romance. "This movie is picking up where we're together. And then how do you make that work and make that interesting?" he said.



Cast members Jennifer Aniston and Owen Wilson pose at the premiere of the movie 'Marley and Me' at the Mann Village theatre in Westwood, California December 11, 2008.

(Mario Anzuoni/Reuters)

In "Marley & Me," directed by "The Devil Wears Prada" director David Frankel, the chase scenes and action sequences come in the form of the couple's dog, a rambunctious yellow Labrador named Marley who they dub "the world's worst dog."

But the movie, which is based on the autobiographical bestselling book of the same name, is less about Marley than about his owners, the Grogans, as they struggle with balancing their growing family with their career ambitions. Both are journalists at competing newspapers in Miami.

It's those themes of marriage and family that Aniston and Wilson said they think audiences will find identifiable.

"It's a reminder for people if they are questioning or if they are going, 'why am I in this?' ... through those hard times you keep remeeting and remarrying, and that's sort of the beauty of sticking to it."

Wilson, best known for playing offbeat characters in slapstick comedies like "Meet the Fockers," "Wedding Crashers" and, most recently, "Drillbit Taylor," said he welcomed playing a more believable character. "It was nice to do a movie that everyday when you showed up to work it was like 'Okay, I can believe the stuff that I'm doing,'" Wilson said. Aniston was effusive about Wilson's performance, saying audiences will see a new side of him as an actor.

"You're such a brilliant comedian but you're just also an extremely deep," she said to Wilson. "You have such a well of emotion that is untapped. You are untapped talent, Owen!"

Aniston, too, is known for comedic turns during ten seasons on the blockbuster television sitcom "Friends" and films "The Break-Up," "Along Came Polly," and "Bruce Almighty." □



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'Titanic' duo DiCaprio and Winslet sail again



In this image released by Paramount Home Entertainment, Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio are shown in a scene from, 'Titanic.'

By DAVID GERMAIN
AP Movie Writer

LOS ANGELES — That pesky iceberg kept Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet from growing into an old married couple in "Titanic." They finally get to test-drive a long-term relationship in "Revolutionary Road," and the two close friends really nail the whole love-and-marriage thing. Lies. Distrust. Infidelity. Titanic shouting matches to rival George and Martha's in "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" After playing new lovers in a doomed romance aboard "Titanic," DiCaprio and Winslet had a great time tearing into each other as spouses in a sinking relationship in "Revolutionary Road." "We very much took

(AP Photo/Paramount Pictures)

advantage of our friendship and our relationship for this film," DiCaprio said in an interview alongside Winslet. "When I read the script, I thought, look at these scenes, and I'm imagining Kate doing it with me and being able to push each other as much as we possibly could. "That gave me immediately a desire to say, 'OK, I can't wait for these sequences to start. I'm really going to give it to her, she's really going to give it to me.' And I know the fact that she's such a good friend of mine, we know each other so well, we know that we could push those boundaries, because we intrinsically know we have the best intentions for each other. So there's no weird, hidden ego. There's no hidden anything. It's two people just trying to do their best and just

pushing each other."

"Revolutionary Road" casts DiCaprio, 34, and Winslet, 33, as Frank and April Wheeler, a couple suffocating amid the blandness of 1950s American suburbia who hope to resurrect their crumbling marriage by moving to Paris with their children.

Directed by Winslet's husband, Sam Mendes, "Revolutionary Road" calls on the actors to quarrel savagely right from the film's opening moments. It was an interesting challenge for Winslet and DiCaprio, who became close chums on the arduous "Titanic" shoot and cannot recall ever raising their voices to each other.

"People would say, 'Oh my gosh, you guys are such good friends. Did you ever, like, fight?' And we really would have to stop and think about it and realize that we hadn't," Winslet said.

After 1997's "Titanic," the biggest modern blockbuster with \$1.8 billion at the box office worldwide, Winslet and DiCaprio knew they had to choose carefully if they were going to pair off again on-screen.

"We couldn't not realize that the elephant in the room was that we had done this film 'Titanic,' which happened to be the most successful movie of all time," DiCaprio said. "To try to recreate anything close to that would be a mistake. It's important for me and for both of us to not make it look like we want to become sort of a couple that revisits things."

In a haughty British accent, he jokingly added: "Well, they enjoyed that first performance, let's give it to them one more time, darling. Just like the old days."

Although both felt it was just a matter of time before they teamed up again, it took 11

years before they were back on-set together.

"As the years were going by, the idea of working together again, I was craving it more and more," Winslet said. "Very selfishly, I felt it has to be the right thing, because I want to be on the set with him every day. I want to spend as much time with him as possible. It wasn't about equal roles, even. It was, I want to bleed that experience dry. I really

do, because I know what's there to be had, and anything less than that wouldn't have seemed as special."

For all the rewards "Titanic" brought, Winslet got an Oscar nomination, DiCaprio didn't. They hope "Revolutionary Road" might change that.

DiCaprio said he liked the idea of both scoring Oscar nominations this time because "I'd just like to hang out with her." □

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Avoiding the painkiller-overuse rut in migraines

By **LAURAN NEERGAARD**
AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON — Those pain pills you think help your migraines? Take too many and you could make them worse. Overusing painkillers can spin migraine patients into a rut, spurring more headaches that in turn require more pain medication. A very unlucky fraction even get what’s called chronic migraine, where they’re in pain more days than not, and new research suggests certain prescription painkillers, including narcotics, increase that risk. Don’t misunderstand: Treating migraines, properly, is important. The bigger message is to try migraine-preventing medicines if the tenacious headaches strike regularly — so that you don’t fall into the painkiller rut like

Rena Cerbone did. “It was a double-edged sword,” Cerbone, 41, of Montclair, N.J., says of a period when only one pain reliever dulled her migraines and then invariably triggered rebound headaches a day or so later. “I was taking Fiorinal on a daily basis just to function.” The caution is timely, as the estimated 30 million Americans who suffer migraines — migraineurs, they’re called — often find the holiday season a time of increased pain. Lack of sleep, tempting treats and the stress of travel are common triggers. The head throbs, usually on one side, anywhere from a few hours to three days. Nausea and sensitivity to light and sound are common. Moving makes it worse. Some people can sense them coming with

visual disturbances like seeing pinpoints of light, although lacking that classic “aura” doesn’t mean you don’t have a migraine. Fortunately for most patients, migraines are every-so-often miseries. Studies suggest that about a third of migraine sufferers have them often enough to be candidates for prevention medications that can cut the frequency in half. Yet only about 10 percent use them. And depending on acute painkillers more than a few days a week can signal overuse. “Most people outside the specialty community are not aware of the concept,” said Dr. Stephen Silberstein of Thomas Jefferson University, a spokesman for the American Academy of Neurology. “I



Rena Cerbone, 41, talks about medication on the counter that she currently takes to prevent migraines, at her home in Montclair, N.J., Friday, Dec. 19, 2008. Cerbone says she found relief after a period of rebound headaches provoked by the painkiller used to dull her frequent migraines.

(AP Photo/Mike Derer)

think there’s an epidemic in the U.S. of patients having frequent headaches, taking their pain pills over and over again,” and winding up in more pain. Overusing any pain medication, over-the-counter or prescription, can cause a rebound headache once it’s stopped. But occasionally in frequent migraine sufferers, the brain gradually becomes more sensitive to pain so they worsen even more. When they’re having pain a stunning 15 or more days a month, it’s called chronic migraine or “transformed migraine.” No one knows exactly how many people get that bad, although migraine specialist Dr. Richard Lipton of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine says some estimates suggest there could be as many as 5 million. “Chronic migraine is a condition we should be trying to prevent,” says Lipton, who also heads New York’s Montefiore Headache Center and studied whether particular medicines are linked to this worst-case pain. The study tracked 8,200 episodic migraine sufferers for a year, and found 2.5 percent worsened to a state of chronic migraine. Those who took two classes of prescription medications — drugs containing narcotics, such as Percocet, or drugs containing barbiturates, such as Fiorinal — were most likely to worsen,

Lipton and colleagues reported in the journal Headache. Risk increased with higher doses. Over-the-counter standbys, from plain acetaminophen to the anti-inflammatories called NSAIDS — ibuprofen, naproxen and their cousins — weren’t linked to chronic migraine. The NSAIDS even showed a hint of protection. Migraine-specific painkillers called triptans likewise showed no risk at low to moderate use, becoming a risk factor only after 10 pain days a month. Some patients will need the stronger narcotics or barbiturates, especially for severe attacks, Lipton acknowledges. But, “the reality is they’re overused” in migraines, he says, advising that patients who truly need them limit weekly doses. Chronic migraine aside, getting out of the medication-overuse rut is hard. In New Jersey, it took Cerbone several tries before she found a migraine specialist who cut her prescription painkiller cold turkey and found a daily prevention medication that has worked since August. Headache specialists advise: Ask about migraine-prevention drugs. Choices range from blood pressure-lowering drugs called beta-blockers to epilepsy drugs and certain antidepressants, all of which have side effects to be considered. Some patients even try Botox injections, to quiet overactive nerve endings. □



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Toyota projects first loss in 70 years

By YURI KAGEYAMA

AP Business Writers

NAGOYA, Japan — Toyota has hit a speedbump.

The Japanese auto giant forecast its first operating loss in 70 years on Monday, more fallout

from the severe slump in vehicle sales that has nearly claimed two Detroit automakers and raised questions over when the U.S. market, Toyota's largest, will hit bottom.

Despite the setback, the

automaker is still poised to pull ahead of its main U.S. rival, General Motors Corp., to become the No. 1 world carmaker in 2008, industry watchers said. Toyota reported it sold 7.05 million cars

worldwide during the first nine months of the year, compared with 6.66 million for GM for the same period.

"They're going to grow and outstrip General Motors, there's no way around that," said George Magliano, analyst with IHS Global Insight.

Toyota Motor Corp., which is committed to zero layoffs, will continue cutting production to weather the downturn. The automaker also lowered its global vehicle sales forecast for the second time this year and said it was putting ambitious expansion plans on hold, in large part because of a precipitous drop in demand in the U.S.

"The tough times are hitting us far faster, wider and deeper than expected," Toyota President Katsuaki Watanabe told a gloomy news conference at the company's Nagoya, Japan, headquarters. "This is an unprecedented crisis requiring urgent action."

Sona Iliffe-Moon, a spokeswoman for the automaker's U.S. arm., said the company has not had any layoffs since the 1950s.

"As a result of that experience, it became a part of our culture to ensure employment and

stability for employees," Iliffe-Moon said

Toyota had reported strong growth in recent years, boosted by heavy demand for its fuel-efficient models like the Camry sedan and Prius gas-electric hybrid.

But Watanabe said a severe drop in demand, especially in North America, which accounts for one-third of vehicle sales, and profit erosion from a surging yen were too much for Japan's No. 1 automaker. Overall U.S. auto sales fell to their lowest level in 26 years last month.

"The change that has hit the world economy is of a critical scale that comes once in 100 years," Watanabe said.

Toyota said it expects an operating loss of 150 billion yen (\$1.66 billion) for the fiscal year ending in March, compared with an operating profit of 2.27 trillion yen (\$25.2 billion) a year earlier.

Toyota said it would still post a small net profit of 50 billion yen (\$555 million), thanks to outside dividend income, down from year-earlier earnings of 1.7 trillion yen (\$18.89 billion). But operating income is seen as the best reflection of its core business. □

Governments must be ready to spend more on stimulus



MF Chief Economist Olivier Blanchard in an undated photo.

(Handout/Reuters)

PARIS (Reuters) — Governments should be ready to increase their spending on economic stimulus programs if circumstances require it, the International Monetary Fund's chief economist Olivier Blanchard said in comments published on Tuesday.

In an interview with French daily Le Monde, Blanchard called on Germany in particular to boost its spending in the next few months as some of its European partners such as France have called for.

"The coming months will be very bad. Halting this loss of confidence, providing stimulus and, if necessary, replacing private demand are essential if we want to prevent the recession from becoming a Great Depression," Blanchard told Le Monde.

Blanchard said the IMF was sticking to a target of 2 percent of global gross domestic

product for the fiscal stimulus required, but warned that more may be needed.

"If the circumstances require it, states must be ready to do more, 3 percent or more if necessary," he said, adding: "We must think about it now because it is not easy to spend such large sums of money efficiently."

Germany has been criticized by some other European countries, particularly France, for not being prepared to spend more on an EU-wide stimulus program to kickstart growth as the global financial crisis hits the real economy.

Berlin says it will review its stimulus program in January to see if more spending is necessary.

"The important thing is to support activity and boost confidence now. The coming six months are of capital importance," Blanchard said.

"If Germany did not participate sufficiently in this stimulus, many other countries would also hesitate to do so and the effect would be disastrous for Europe."

FIXING THE BANKS

Blanchard also criticized Britain's decision to cut value-added tax by 2.5 percentage points, saying it would not influence consumers' behavior significantly.

"Temporarily cutting VAT, a measure that was adopted in Great Britain, does not seem to me to be a good idea -- 2 percent less is not perceived by consumers as a real incentive to

spend," he said.

By contrast, he said a French measure aimed at encouraging people to buy cars was a good idea.

Overall, it was better to stimulate growth by boosting public expenditure rather than by cutting taxes at a time when households tended to increase their savings, he said.

Other tools needed to kickstart the economy included monetary policy and measures to repair the financial system given banks were still reducing their lending to individuals, companies and emerging markets, he said. To address financial system concerns, banks should recognize their losses and clarify the state of their balance sheets.

"They are doing this no doubt, but too slowly, something that is introducing uncertainty and continuing to worry investors," he said.

Governments could help lenders as they worked toward such goals by prodding or forcing them to spin off toxic assets.

Once such steps were taken, many banks would be seriously undercapitalized, making it necessary for governments to step in and take stakes if private investment proved inadequate. States should also stand ready to step in if it took too long for credit market activity to return to normal.

Governments could purchase commercial paper as the U.S. Federal Reserve had done during the crisis, he said. □



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Sacred texts:

Vatican embraces iTunes prayer book



Father Paolo Padrini holds up his I-Breviary, a digital version of the breviary, in downtown Rome, Monday, Dec. 22, 2008. Father Padrini, a 35-year-old techno-priest made a digital version of the Breviary, the book of daily prayers that is now available as a download in the I-Tunes store. The Vatican embraced the initiative of father Padrini, stressing that new technologies are already widely used by the Church.

(AP Photo/Pier Paolo Cito)

VATICAN CITY – The Vatican is endorsing new technology that brings the book of daily prayers used by priests straight onto iPhones.

The Vatican's Pontifical Council for Social Communications is embracing the iBreviary, an iTunes application created by a technologically savvy Italian priest, the Rev. Paolo Padrini, and an Italian Web designer.

The application includes the Breviary prayer book — in Italian, English, Spanish, French and Latin and, in the near future, Portuguese and German. Another section includes the prayers of the daily Mass, and a third contains various other prayers.

After a free trial period in which the iBreviary was downloaded approximately 10,000 times in Italy, an official version was released earlier this month, Padrini said.

The application costs euro0.79 (\$1.10), while upgrades will be free. Padrini's proceeds are going to charity.

Monsignor Paul Tighe, secretary of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Social Communications, praised the new application Monday, saying the Church "is learning to use the new technologies primarily as a tool or as a mean of evangelizing, as a way of being able to share its own message with the world."

Pope Benedict XVI, a classical music lover who was reportedly given an iPod in 2006, has sought to reach out to young people through new media. During last summer's World Youth Day in Sydney, Australia, he sent out mobile phone text messages citing scripture to thousands of registered pilgrims — signed with the tagline "BXVI."

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